



Governing Body

320th Session, Geneva, 13–27 March 2014

GB.320/INS/14/4

Institutional Section

INS

Date: 30 January 2014

Original: English

FOURTEENTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

Report of the Director-General

Fourth Supplementary Report: Developments in relation to the agreement between the ILO and the International Organization for Standardization, including in the field of occupational safety and health

Purpose of the document

This document reviews the pilot implementation of the agreement between the ILO and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) authorized by the Governing Body in March 2013 and signed in August 2013. The Governing Body is invited to decide whether to extend the pilot implementation for one year, to be reviewed at its session in March 2015 (see draft decision in paragraph 13).

Relevant strategic objective: Cross-cutting.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: See paragraph 13.

Author unit: Office of the Deputy Director-General for Policy (DDG/P).

Related documents: GB.317/INS/13/7; GB.316/INS/15/7(Rev.); GB.316/PV(&Corr.); GB.310/PV; GB.309/PV; GB.298/15/5; GB.298/PV; GB.319/INS/INF/1.

1. At its 319th Session in October 2013, the Governing Body received for information an agreement that had been concluded between the ILO and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on a pilot basis. The Governing Body had decided in March 2013 that the agreement could be concluded by the Office subject to the inclusion of certain elements, which were indeed included.¹ It also decided to pilot the agreement through specific collaboration in the field of occupational safety and health management systems (OSH–MS). The Governing Body requested a review of the pilot implementation of the agreement at its 320th Session in March 2014.
2. This document reviews the ILO’s experience in implementing the agreement to date within the specific context of collaboration with ISO in the field of OSH–MS and evaluates the potential for future collaboration, both in that field and beyond. It suggests possible next steps in order for the Governing Body to decide whether to extend the pilot implementation for one year, to be reviewed again at its session in March 2015.

Developments in relation to OSH–MS

3. Pursuant to a June 2013 decision of ISO’s Technical Management Board, ISO established a Project Committee, ISO/PC 283, *Occupational health and safety management systems – Requirements*. The Project Committee is serviced by the British Standards Institution (BSI). The requirements standard under development, ISO 45001, is process-oriented and is intended “to enable an organization to control its OH&S risks and improve its OH&S performance”. The standard will not “state specific OH&S performance criteria, nor [will] it give detailed specifications for the design of a management system”.²
4. In accordance with the Governing Body’s March 2013 authorization, the Office established a liaison with ISO’s Project Committee 283 under the specific terms of the ILO–ISO agreement, and attended its first meeting from 21 to 25 October 2013 in London. It also participated in subsequent rounds of electronic correspondence in preparation for a meeting of the working group established by the Project Committee to review a working draft. The ILO’s participation is being undertaken in consultation with the constituents and with particular regard to relevant ILO standards, guidelines and related action.³
5. In introducing the ILO–ISO agreement to the Project Committee at its opening session, the ILO stressed the commitment to consistency with the relevant ILO standards and guidelines, which it had added to the Committee’s list of relevant sources. The Committee established a working group, which in turn created five task groups to draft the standard. The drafting work will be guided by ISO’s standardized template for management system

¹ These elements included the requirement that ILO–ISO cooperation must ensure the conformity of ISO standards with relevant ILO standards or guidelines, and the requirement that the ILO be afforded an effective presence within the relevant ISO committee/body. See GB.317/INS/13/7 (March 2013), para. 4; GB.316/PV(&Corr), para. 320; GB.310/PV, para. 262; GB.309/PV, para. 363; GB.298/PV, para. 295.

² ISO/PC 283/N.1.

³ See GB.317/INS/13/7 (March 2013), para. 4. The ILO’s *Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems, ILO–OSH 2001* offer non-binding guidance on how to implement relevant international labour standards on occupational safety and health at the national and organizational levels.

standards,⁴ along with a design specification adopted by the Committee that lists a number of undefined “general principles” to which the drafting is to adhere, including “worker participation”. The ILO’s participation has focused on trying to ensure consistency with relevant international labour standards and guidelines, including OSH rights and responsibilities at the level of the undertaking, and cooperation between management and workers and/or their representatives. Key terms and concepts remain to be settled, including “worker” and “workplace” and the definition of “worker representatives” as well as their rights and functions in line with ILO standards. A number of issues necessary to the balance of OSH–MS as reflected in ILO standards and guidelines are not yet included and remain to be raised, such as employers’ responsibility for OSH and recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases. The next meeting, which will take place in Morocco from 24 to 28 March 2014, is expected to produce a committee draft.

6. The ISO requirements standard, which can be used for certification, along with an informative annex providing guidance for its use, are to be completed within 36 months, that is, by September 2016. Future work is expected to involve reviewing and commenting on new sections as the draft standard evolves, and participating in drafting sections electronically and in three physical meetings. The Office’s effective participation in the complex drafting process requires intensive preparation and coordination across a number of its technical units. Familiarity with ISO management systems approaches and procedures is required, as well as knowledge of the relevant ILO standards and guidelines.
7. It is still too early in the process to predict the ultimate outcome of the ILO’s input to the development of ISO 45001. In general, the ILO’s contributions have been well received thus far and its interventions have led to the insertion of text in the working draft that promotes consistency with the relevant ILO standards and guidelines. The interactions with representatives of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in the Committee’s work continue to be strategic and valuable.⁵ As the drafting progresses, the ILO will need to provide timely further input and guidelines on relevant international labour standards in order to maintain and build on the foundation for their use as the source of reference for matters related to the ILO in the ISO standard.

Further developments

8. Along with ISO 45001, other ongoing work of ISO which is relevant to the ILO may be worthy of consideration for inclusion in the pilot implementation of the ILO–ISO agreement. In several areas, the ILO reports on ongoing relations and activities with ISO to the Governing Body. For example, under the terms of a specific ILO–ISO memorandum of understanding (MoU) on social responsibility concluded in 2005, the ILO continues to participate in the working arrangements in the follow-up to ISO 26000, a guidance document on social responsibility in which the ILO participated extensively. Along with the IOE and ITUC, the ILO participates in the post-publication organization advisory group which monitors the promotion and use of ISO 26000 but which has no

⁴ The template, ISO Annex SL, was modified before the first meeting in light of an initial round of comments (before the ILO had begun participating) and in light of ISO 14001 (Environmental Management). This Revised Proof of Concept still presents challenges in seeking to accommodate certain OSH areas, such as the definition of “risk”.

⁵ The ILO voiced support in the first meeting of the Project Committee for the liaison applications of the IOE and the ITUC. The IOE’s application has since been approved by vote; voting on the ITUC’s application is still under way at the time of writing.

decision-making role.⁶ ISO is currently undertaking a survey of national standards bodies to determine whether the instrument needs to be revised. Numerous national standards bodies will likely urge that ISO 26000 be transformed into a requirements standard, which, unlike a guidance document, could be subject to certification by third-party accredited bodies.

9. Similarly, follow-up work on the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), continues between the ILO and ISO after the 2009 approval of a joint ISO–International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standard on deploying an international system for biometric-enabled seafarer identity documents.⁷ Along with the above work, the ILO also has liaison status in 34 other ISO committees and subcommittees dealing with practical and highly technical matters relevant to a number of ILO Conventions and codes of practice.⁸ An Office review of the value and impact of these liaisons is ongoing, as is a review of references in ILO codes of practice to specific ISO standards, some of which have expired or been revised by ISO since the codes' publication.
10. Still other issues of relevance to the ILO are the subject of ongoing ISO standardization but without ILO input. In the field of human resource management (HRM), for example, ISO is currently at the early stages of developing five standards within ISO/TC 260.⁹ In 2011, on a review of ISO's decision to proceed with standardization in the field of HRM despite the ILO's earlier objections, the Governing Body requested the Director-General to respond to any ISO request for cooperation in the field of HRM by underlining the need for a clear and shared understanding of the respective competences of the ILO and ISO as the precondition for any such cooperation. While no such agreement was pursued at the time, the present ILO–ISO pilot agreement does reflect such an understanding.¹⁰ ISO is also undertaking standardization in the field of outsourcing in ISO's Technical Committee 259, which has published a draft international standard for comment which draws on provisions of ISO 26000. The Final Draft International Standard will be sent to ISO voting members for consideration. Under the ILO–ISO agreement, the ILO could choose to review and comment on the draft international standard, if the Governing Body deems it appropriate. Under the agreement, the Office also receives a monthly list of new work

⁶ GB.309/MNE/1; GB.292/PV, para. 209 (satisfied at Office work on MoU on social responsibility).

⁷ *ISO/IEC 24713-3 Information technology – Biometric profiles for interoperability and data interchange – Part 3: biometrics based verification and identification of seafarers*. See GB.306/17/3 (November 2009).

⁸ The issues include marine and technology fields specialized to mechanical engineering, ergonomics, acoustics, fire and personal safety, and a number of OSH-related technical issues. For a list of ILO liaisons in ISO committees, see: http://www.iso.org/iso/home/about/organizations_in_liaison/organizations_in_liaison_details.htm?id=9571&LiaisonList=True (liaison type A denotes effective contribution and type B indicates a wish to be kept informed). The ILO has a total of 36 liaisons, covering both seafarers' identity documents and OSH–MS. See also GB.298/15/5, para. 7 (March 2007) and GB.309/18/4, para. 8 (November 2010).

⁹ The five standards concern: Management by sustainable employability of staff; Human resource management – Cost-per-hire; Human governance – Human dimension as a fundamental part of the overall corporate strategy – Guidelines; and Recruitment and workforce planning. For details, see http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_tc_browse.htm?commid=628737.

¹⁰ GB.309/18/4 (November 2010); GB.310/17/7 (March 2011). See also GB.316/INS/15/7(Rev.), para. 3; GB.310/PV, para. 262.

items from ISO, which it reviews in an inter-departmental task group, but no specific areas for additional ILO engagement have been identified to date.

Options for consideration

11. At this early stage, it is not possible to draw a firm conclusion about the ultimate effectiveness of the ILO–ISO agreement signed in August 2013. In relation to OSH–MS, the drafting process begun in October 2013 has not yet demonstrated a definitive direction. By September 2014, the first-stage draft (Committee Draft) will have been decided by vote; in February–March 2015, the second-stage draft (the Draft International Standard) is scheduled to be sent to the Project Committee secretariat for pre-vote editing. By then, the Office experience in collaboration under the agreement, and the shape of the standard should be evident. In addition to the potential for the ILO to influence the final standard, its continuing with additional work on OSH–MS would enable it to provide information and experience for the Governing Body to evaluate at its March 2015 session in order to make a meaningful assessment of the pilot implementation. At the same time, the Governing Body may wish to provide guidance on the priorities for the ongoing implementation of the ILO–ISO relationship, and on any elements useful to assessing its effectiveness.
12. In relation to other areas of ISO activity relevant to the ILO’s mandate, the added value of an ILO response in any particular ISO field of activity should be assessed strategically against the capacity and resources required for continuous ILO participation in the development of such standards. While such participation is the model being piloted in the OSH–MS field, other models could also be trialled which would involve relatively minimal responses in terms of current ILO capacity, such as commenting in writing on initial and final drafts of a standard and monitoring interim drafts for any key issues on which to provide comments in writing. An intermediate model could involve expert consultants supervised by ILO staff. In any of the above scenarios, under the agreement, the ILO’s liaison status in the committee concerned would permit it to prepare comments on a draft standard to be sent to voting members at one of the two last voting stages.

Draft decision

13. *The Governing Body:*

- (a) *decides to extend for one year the pilot implementation of the ILO–ISO agreement signed on 6 August 2013, noting in particular that collaboration on OSH–MS is still under development, and to review the implementation of the agreement at its 323rd Session in March 2015; and*
- (b) *provides guidance on priorities and challenges to be taken into account in continued piloting of the ILO–ISO agreement, and on particular elements for assessing its effectiveness.*